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NOTE ON THE WOMEN AND THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DECADE IN AFRICA RESEARCH PROJECT

1. The research project on women and the Industrialization Decade in Africa was stimulated by ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 447(XVII) which requested research to be done on the participation of women in the Industrial Development Decade in Africa for presentation to the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development. In response to this resolution ECA through the African Training and Research Centre for Women designed and secured funding for a research project which forms part of its 1984-1985 work programme, the ultimate aim of which is to help ensure the equitable participation of women in the industrialization process in Africa. Throughout, the subsidiary aim is to supply the secretariat for the Industrial Development Decade in Africa (198 -1989) with the necessary information so that women's needs and situation can be taken into account in planning with member States for the Decade.

2. Among the important issues to be considered are how to guard against the adverse effects which technology transfer and redeployment might have on women, how the current economic crisis is affecting women's participation in the industrialization process, the need to develop technologies to alleviate the burden of women's work, the need to upgrade technologies in sectors and subsectors where women are heavily engaged to ensure that they are not displaced by new technologies, and the need to examine cultural, social and economic constraints which limit women's full participation in the industrialization process.

3. The short-term objectives of the project are to develop recommendations and a plan of action for the participation of women in the Industrial Development Decade in Africa; to present the ECA Conference of Ministers of Industry with a positive strategy for the participation of women in the Industrialization Decade in Africa; and through the medium of the Third Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development/Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Conference on the United Nations Decade for Women, to give input for the world survey on the role of women in development in selected sectors of the International Development Strategy of the Third United Nations Development Decade (as mandated by resolutions of the General Assembly).

4. To meet the long- and short-term objectives, four national case studies have been commissioned. The countries where the studies are taking place are Egypt, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania. These countries were chosen for reasons representing a combination of factors. Importance was given to historical/economic/social factors, patterns of industrialization, nature of industrial ownership, and socio-cultural situations of women as variables to be considered. Geographical and language distribution were also included.

5. From 6-8 February 1984 a research methodology meeting on women and the industrial development decade in Africa project was held at ECA in Addis Ababa. The meeting brought together the four researchers on the project along with ECA/ATRCW experts on women and development, resource persons from the International Trade and Finance Division of ECA, the ECA/UNIDO Joint Industry Division, the ILO Regional Office for Africa, the Ford Foundation (donor of funds for the project), and independent consultants. At this meeting research issues were presented, investigated and a common outline for the national case studies adopted. Each national case study will take five months. The report on the project to be presented to the Third Regional Conference will be a synthesis of the results from the four country case studies.

6. The first section of the study will investigate macro-level issues, including patterns of industrialization and industrial policy. Here the unique national historical backgrounds will be discussed and references made to relevant industrial legislation, the national patterns for the location of industries, and the prevailing system of industrial relations. To secure this data, national economic development plans will be studied, legislation analyzed and interviews conducted with policy makers.

7. Necessary to an understanding of the macro-level issues is an examination of the socio-cultural, historical, and economic factors in the participation of women in industrialization. This will involve an interdisciplinary approach, looking at demographic, population and educational factors, inter alia. This will be followed by an examination of developing tendencies in women's industrial labour force participation, to be illustrated by charts and graphs showing the distribution of women by sectors, and the number of women as a percentage of all workers by industry. In this subsection women's labour force participation will be analyzed in relation to the total labour force, in relation to rates of population growth and to migration patterns. Necessary data will be presented on changes in industrial and occupation distribution and the status of women workers (unpaid, self-employed, wage employed, etc.). Also included in the first major section will be a discussion of the impact of industrial strategy choice (import substitution vs export-led) on women (and men), and the nature and control of industrial ownership by country.

8. The second major section of the study will deal with enterprise level issues. Firstly, the situation of women as industrial entrepreneurs, investors and managers will be studied. The consequences of the nature and control of industrial ownership patterns on women will be examined, including private, public and multinationally-owned enterprises, looking in particular at all types of training and career advancement opportunities; at the individual level, the impact of products and the aspect of resulting changing consumption patterns will be looked into. This section will include material on women's trade union activities, the relationship between industrial requirements and women's skills, and the participation of women in key industries identified for priority action by the Industrial Development Decade in Africa Programme. These key industries include agro-industries, small-scale industries, textiles, forestry, construction, metallurgy, chemical, and packing material industries. The concluding section of the second part will centre on women's work behavior, in an attempt to discern the gap between perception and reality, and women and science and technology. Among the science and technology issues for industrial development are influence of bilateral donor industrial policies, national technology policy, development of technology to improve women's productivity in the home, development of home cottage industries, and women and the transfer of technology (including loss of previous occupations, loss of industrial employment, and changing consumption patterns).

9. The concluding section will make predictions regarding the participation of women in industrialization in Africa to the end of the century and recommendations to influence the course of their participation. It is anticipated that this will be the most important section for purposes of indicating strategies for the programme of the Industrial Development Decade in Africa, as well as the Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Conference on the United Nations Decade for Women and, ultimately, the World Conference on the Decade.